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ABSTRACT

All teachers are teachers of language, whether they recognize it or not, but the importance of language for learning, training, and vocational competence is underemphasized in much postsecondary education. As a result, performance in language for specialized purposes is declining and employers are dissatisfied. An adequate education in language must include options for skill development in a variety of languages including English, community, and foreign languages and should provide an interdisciplinary approach to language use and learning. Language learning objectives should be explicit and openly discussed in the classroom, and English language use requirements in standardized tests should no longer discriminate against working class and bilingual students. A common communicative core language curriculum using different starting points has been proposed in several curriculum and testing plans. All colleges should develop a broad, interdisciplinary language policy and make organizational changes to implement it. Postsecondary level language learning is effective only when negotiated by teacher and student through adequate procedures. (MSE)

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ED277258

An Occasional Paper

LANGUAGE FOR ALL

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LANGUAGE FOR ALL

An analysis of the importance of language in post-16 education

FURTHER EDUCATION UNIT

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FOREWORD

i) This Occasional Paper was produced for the FEU by a small working group of the National Congress on Language in Education (NCLE). It analyses the importance of language beyond compulsory education, and identifies issues concerned with the development of skills in communication, both written and spoken, in English and other languages.

ii) The authors maintain that these issues should be the concern of all FE staff. FE aims to prepare students/trainees for a changing society, but it may no longer be valid to assume that occupational employment requires fixed and possibly limited language skills. Inevitably, the paper appears to be directly aimed at those with special responsibilities for language in education, and the authors suggest that modern language teachers may be failing to advance sufficiently compelling reasons for placing the learning of new languages in the essential core of the curriculum for young people. But many of the issues also have implications for LEA and college management.

iii) For all readers there is a summary of key points at the beginning of the document. For those who have staff development responsibilities, checklists of questions are provided at the end of each main chapter. These checklists should be useful for in-service training sessions.

iv) The authors stress the need for LEA and college language policies which will seek to integrate language into the post compulsory curriculum, based on an analysis of needs arising from sensitive marketing and negotiation. They remind us that it has long been the advice of HMI that attention should be given to the provision of opportunity for foreign and community language learning within the 16-19 curriculum. They claim that it is both interesting and useful for students to know <u>about</u> language. This type of awareness should make young people more capable

of effective study, more sensitive to the social nature of language, more tolerant of language variety and change, and more interested in studying languages. Like the Bullock report, they argue that 'the interconnectedness of language, learning and the acquisition of skills is... wholly relevant to all forms of post-16 education'.

v) The document challenges the validity of many of the existing patterns of assessment in language, but sees ways forward in the newer curricula and assessments associated with CPVE, GCSE, etc. The authors suggest that what is often defined as a necessary specialist language of academic learning is often no more than 'particular forms of writing demanded by particular forms of examination'. They point out that the new examinations at 16+ and 17+, with a greater concern for 14-19 curriculum continuity, are creating a climate of change in which basic educational skills are assuming key importance. There are here critical messages for mainstream FE. In recalling earlier ACACE* statements regarding the way in which the black communities look to adult rather than further education for basic and vocational education, the authors interpret this as a need for AE and FE to work together, and for less rigid departmental divisions to exist in FE.

vi) Greater co-operation between teachers, more team-teaching, a more open and shared approach to enquiry and study... these messages are clear, and familiar, in contexts other than language. But for language, there appears to be a particular lack of policy; the Appendix describes an example of a language policy. It is not comprehensive, but it is a start.

vii) The FEU is publishing this document to raise awareness, and to encourage discussion on this area of the curriculum. If we are to move towards a greater continuity across the 14-19 curriculum then a more positive approach to language, such as suggested in this document, could be a useful initiative.

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* Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education

More discussion is obviously required; we would welcome responses from organisations or individuals, and these should be directed to Alan Murray at the FEU. In the meantime, I record the appreciation of the FEU to NCLE and CILT* for their participation in this project.

JACK MANSELL
Chief Officer
Further Education Unit

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* Centre for Information on Language Teaching

INTRODUCTION

This document was produced as a result of FEU support for a working group of the National Congress on Language in Education. That working group produced a set of papers under the title Language and Languages 16-19 which have since been published*. In 1985 a section of the group especially interested in FE reconvened to produce a shorter discussion document. The group consisted of Ann Lim (Chair), Head of Business Studies, NE Derbyshire College of FE; Patrick Scott, Director, Durham Sixth Form Centre; John Broadbent, Brent Language Service and Tony Burgess, Institute of Education, London; John Broadbent, with assistance from Alan Murray, was responsible for drafting this document on the basis of the papers and discussions of the group.

It is intended as a discussion paper and FEU hopes for a response from interested individuals, course teams, colleges or other organisations. The main issues for staff development programmes, course-planning sessions and staff discussion are listed at the end of each chapter.

Because some of the argument is detailed, the following summary of key points raised by the document has been included.

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* Language and Languages 16-19 (Reports and papers of 1984 NCLE Assembly) - CILT (Regent's College, Regent's Park, London NW1 4NS 1986

KEY POINTS

1. All teachers are teachers of language, whether or not they recognise the fact. Many FE teachers see themselves as teachers of specialised vocational (or academic) subjects: improving students' language ability is often seen as someone else's responsibility.

2. Consequently, the importance of language for learning, training and vocational competence is underemphasised in much FE. Performance in vocationally relevant skills is not often recognised (by staff or students) as being related to performance in language. Education in language for many students is therefore relegated to what are seen as low status, 'add on' parts of the curriculum.

3. It is therefore not surprising that performance in language for specialised purposes by many students continues to decline, and employers continue to complain.

4. An adequate education in language must include options and opportunities to develop skills in a variety of languages, including community and foreign languages.

5. The school curriculum is still dominated by the interests of the universities; so, to a lesser extent, is much of the FE curriculum. In languages this means, for example, that the status ascribed to a literary tradition is higher than that ascribed to the communicative tradition, and that certain European languages are ascribed higher status than non-European languages actually spoken in modern British society. These priorities are likely to change in a comprehensive post-16 provision.

6. Priorities for local post-16 provision can only be effectively decided on the basis of efficient marketing, which will involve ascertaining student and community needs and interests as well as those of industry and public bodies.

7. An education in language which provides students with opportunities to develop skills in their language(s) for a variety of specialised purposes will be best provided through a curriculum which emphasises the interconnectedness of subjects and skills rather than a subject dominated and divided curriculum.

8. Language is used for a wide variety of personal, social, academic and vocational purposes. The conventions for the use of different forms and registers of language in different situations, and the criteria on which these conventions are based, are rarely made explicit in the classroom. Students learn better if such conventions and their implications are made explicit and are openly discussed in the classrooms.

9. Current GCE examinations emphasise particular notions of correct usage in English which continue to discriminate against working class and bilingual students. Alternative modes, methods of assessment and syllabuses are required for all students if this situation is to be changed. Such assessment should be designed to record student achievement in skills and knowledge which relate directly to student needs and future roles.

10. The possibility of developing a common communicative core which reconciles views on language teaching based on very different starting-points is offered in new schemes such as CPVE, and TVEI and in the national criteria for the GCSE examinations, especially in papers being developed for 'minority' languages.

11. Curriculum changes involving greater integration between subjects and greater flexibility of provision will be successful only as part of an overall college policy on language. All colleges should develop such a policy and should examine what organisational changes might facilitate the implementation of policy (e.g. the appointment of a language co-ordinator at senior level).

12. Language development for post-16 students, whether or not they have made clear vocational or academic choices, can be effectively achieved only on the basis of negotiation between teacher and student.

13. Successful negotiation of a language development programme for a student is dependent on adequate procedures in a college to assess student language needs, interests and purposes.

1. LANGUAGE ISSUES IN FURTHER EDUCATION

1. A number of important points about language and languages are raised in this report which have relevance for all forms of education continuing beyond 16. A basis for a greater coherence of approach to the teaching of language is suggested which can arise naturally from a recognition of shared principles.

2. It is difficult to do justice to the complexity of issues relating to language in post-16 education. The effort is worth making because of the current importance attached to several of these issues. There has been a concern that the pre- and post-16 curriculum should become yet more instrumental, more vocationally relevant. There has been a simultaneous and partially opposing trend for the design of courses which are intrinsically motivating and worthwhile. The case is advanced for all sections of the community to receive some form of continuing education into their adult years. Additionally and belatedly there has been a welcome recognition in educational circles of the necessity to oppose racial and sexual discrimination, and with that recognition a widening of received attitudes towards cultural differences resulting from social and economic class, regional origin or religious and political persuasion.

3. Each of these viewpoints has implications as far as language is concerned. They recur in different permutations. They lie behind many of the current initiatives and debates in education as a whole and in further education in particular. There has, however, been little attention paid specifically to language education for the age group beyond 16 and no single approach which has identified common needs or common problems in a whole area of education embracing English (as a mother tongue or for speakers of other languages), modern languages (which includes all languages, not merely the five most commonly taught European ones), communications, computer studies, information science, media studies, and so on.

4. Any attempt to set out principles for language in post-16 education inherits more than a decade of sustained public discussion about language within the earlier, statutory years. The findings of the Bullock Report, A Language for Life (HMSO, 1975), and the guidelines subsequently proposed by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in their document Curriculum 11-16 both contain parallel arguments which should not be ignored in later phases of provision. The core curriculum proposed in A Basis for Choice (FEU, 1982), and subsequently used as the basis for many FE and school pre-vocational courses, though less explicitly, shares similar principles. The need for continuity between pre- and post-16 provision forms a substantial part of the reasoning behind this view.

5. A central assumption has been that language and responsibility for its teaching should be seen as a continuing part of teaching in every aspect of the curriculum. This needs no substantial qualification for the 16-19 phase. The responsibility is well formulated by Her Majesty's Inspectorate in Curriculum 11-16:

> 'Every teacher - indeed, every person in a relationship with other people in which language plays a part - conveys attitudes to language by his use of it, and by the use of language he asks or expects from others...'
>
> 'A school sets out to make possible its pupils' effective language behaviour within it, and to equip them for their needs beyond it...'
>
> 'The best scientific and historical writing illustrates both the confident use of the conventions and the ability to bend them to make new meanings...'

6. All too often, however, a preoccupation with conventions on the part of the teacher can itself convey attitudes about students' use of language, attitudes which undermine the very self-confidence that the instruction is designed to generate. This document returns to this issue when discussing language for academic purposes and again in its consideration of

structural constraints. The task of equipping students to meet demands on their language behaviour beyond and outside college is not a simple matter of stipulating and exacting specific performances. An understanding of language's constraints is required; and the deeper that understanding is, the freer people are to modify and make use of those constraints for their own purposes. This is a matter of especial relevance within the 16-19 phase, where positive features include the diversity of courses offered and the developing social maturity and instrumental motivation amongst young adults who are students by choice not compulsion.

7. The concern for the role of language in learning should be underwritten for the 16-19 phase, even if this concern has not been as evident in traditional vocational education as it has been in the earlier statutory phases. An increasing number of vocational teachers are, however, aware that students can be enabled to learn through language or languages if they are encouraged to use them for expanding purposes of enquiry and exchange of knowledge. It is also increasingly accepted that language should be seen as part of every aspect of the curriculum and that language is best acquired when it meets the instrumental purposes to which the student wishes to put it.*

The Context of Linguistic Diversity and its Requirements

8. Any aspect of education now needs to be considered within the context of a diverse and multilingual society, not of a culturally homogeneous, monolingual one. The demands of distinct cultural and racial groups within society for an education responsive to their needs have highlighted the necessity to develop explicitly anti-racist policies within education generally; yet the curriculum reform entailed by this, especially within the differentiated routes of post-16 education, has barely begun. Language teaching in schools and colleges remains restricted to two distinct kinds. On the one hand there is the teaching of English and on the other

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*See Building a Framework, J McAllister and M Robson, National Extension College, 1984.

the teaching of a few (European) languages, modern and classical. Both kinds of teaching originated within assumptions of cultural and linguistic homogeneity, which even in their day were oversimplified. They are assumptions made no longer tenable by the changes in the configuration of cultural and linguistic diversity which have taken place in recent years. School and college populations are now likely to contain large numbers of students for whom English is a second, third, even fourth language. There are also students who are fluent speakers of English but who also speak another language or languages and students who have in their repertoire an overseas dialect of English, or a British-based form of it, or a distinct African-based creole.

9. Statistics on school students compiled in recent years indicate that more than a dozen languages, as well as a range of creoles and dialects, are widely used by young people in this country. Failure to draw on the educational resources which this language diversity provides is not only bad teaching but can lead to the pupils concerned becoming passive and negative about language development, and education itself. To encourage such students to seek narrow educational success at the cost of severance from their language and cultural heritage, as has happened in the past, is not acceptable educational practice. Whilst there are, of course, parts of Great Britain where schools and colleges may not actually encounter diversity on the scale which is being suggested, they still have to accommodate the overall circumstances of change.

10. Covert and overt language provision in educational institutions still fails to confront, let alone overcome, historical and environmental factors, factors which have the effect of making pupils negative and passive with regard to language development and knowledge itself. Successful students are often those who have been severed from their cultural heritage rather than those whose existing language skills and cultural knowledge has been encouraged to grow.

11. There are implications here both for general policy and

for the support of local college- and school-based initiatives. Rosen and Burgess (1980) are sceptical 'about the results of authority fiats which attempt to lay down obligations, e.g. that any school which contains a group of pupils which speaks a language other than English and exceeding X in number must provide mother tongue teaching for Y hours per week...' Nevertheless they enunciate a general principle:

> 'Nothing can relieve schools (and colleges) from the task of evolving a tailor-made policy and practice from the particular mix which confronts them.'

These principles apply equally to 16-19 education. All means by which the languages and dialects of the students can be brought within the life of the colleges should be explored. Specifically, this should mean that any curriculum which takes student needs seriously would have to make available fully validated components in the major community languages.

12. The breadth and strength of the linguistic repertoire of young people in Britain today has been welcomed in the Swann Report* and in many local authorities. However, there are still some teachers who see the diversity of languages and of the styles of language used in society as a threat to earlier notions of received or 'standard' English. Perhaps the most important point here is a full understanding of the notion of 'appropriacy': that different modes of expression each have a context in which they are valid. Although the forms of language used in academic work are continually changing, there are always, at any given time, certain expectations of 'language for academic purposes' of which students and teachers need to be aware. Students who are speakers of languages other than English may require support in the formal tasks posed by following such a course of study through the medium of English. So may other students. Teachers who have adopted strategies for language support in

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* Education for All, HMSO, 1985. Chapter 9-Language and language education.

various subjects often report that it is not only their ESL students who are helped by teaching materials offering clear models in the use of academic discourse. Strategies for development in reading, in discussion and in writing form an essential part of the study skills relevant to each course followed, and require a deliberate focus as part of the process of learning.

13. Proficiency within such specialised uses of language, for students of any linguistic repertoire, will not be achieved either by simply asserting their importance or by a pedagogy of repetitious practice, in which uses of language are restricted merely to those of a formal kind. Students must become aware of the purposes for which such language is used and must recognise, in real contexts, the need for particular conventions, strategies and modifications of style. By such means they may become willing to make such uses their own.

Further Languages in Further Education

14. One of the major achievements of comprehensive schooling in Britain has been to ensure that over the last ten to twenty years almost all children have had some experience of learning a language (usually French) other than their own. However, the number of students rejecting this additional language experience after five years or after three years offers less cause for satisfaction. The shrinking number of students who continue to study any language other than French in the sixth form has meant that courses in other languages in higher education have had increasingly to cater for some learners at the beginner stage.

15. In a consultative paper, Foreign Languages in the School Curriculum, (DES, 1983), it was pointed out that the educational system in England and Wales differed greatly from the norm in Europe in that the specialised nature of post 'O' level studies (whether undertaken in schools or further education) often precludes the opportunity for even linguistically able pupils to keep up their language skills at school after the age of 16. Professional language

teaching organisations have responded with the argument that every student in full-time education should have a component of his/her course which provides knowledge of at least one language other than English.

16. Courses in languages widely used in Britain such as Greek, Gujarati or Punjabi are widespread in the voluntary sector, but, as far as the maintained sector is concerned, often exist only in adult evening classes. Campaigns to win recognition for qualifications in such languages for access to higher education have met with only partial success. Professional organisations have echoed the DES in stressing the need for opportunities to be provided for pupils after the age of 16 to learn a second, third or even fourth language. But implementation of such policies at local level has been a concern in very few local authorities.

17. Despite an equally gloomy picture at the higher academic levels, enrolments for language courses in adult education remain buoyant. It would seem then that modern language teachers are failing to advance sufficiently compelling reasons for placing the learning of new languages in the essential core of the educational curriculum for young people. It is therefore crucial at this time to restate those elements of a rationale for language education which have carried the most force in recent deliberations. At a political and social level these refer to a greater need for unity and cohesion, and unity within Europe and beyond; at the individual level they relate to a proper preparation for a varied cultural and vocational life.

18. Of the major institutions concerning themselves with educational provision for a multilingual, international society, the Council of Europe has made the major contribution to date. Working through its Council for Cultural Co-operation, it focused its attention initially on an analysis of the needs of adult learners of English in Europe. By 1975 The Threshold Level in a European Unit/Credit System for Modern Language Learning by Adults appeared with supporting documents by several leading authorities in the field of language teaching and syllabus

design. These documents then formed the basis of a further development - laying down objectives for foreign language learning in compulsory education. The resultant syllabuses have met with some criticism, from the point of view of their cultural assumptions. Nevertheless, the aims which underlay their design are of considerable value. Two aims in particular are of special relevance to our concerns here.

19. First, it was recognised that the actual choice of language to be learned need not affect the main educational value of learning how to acquire a new language. In its own words, it included 'a methodological initiation which would, on the one hand, facilitate continued study of the language and, on the other hand, make it possible to acquire a sufficient understanding of the learning process used, so that these may be profitably applied to the study of other languages.'

20. Secondly, it enabled curriculum planning, particularly the definition of successive terminal objectives, to start at the logical end, i.e. at the most basic objective. There is still a tendency to start at the 'highest' (i.e. academic) objective and derive lower objectives by means of a process of elimination. This risks gearing activity to the needs of a tiny proportion of students.

21. The feasibility of offering challenging language courses to a wider range of students from sixth form to further education is currently enhanced by a number of interrelated factors:

- the growing numbers of literate users of community languages (including Southern European, South Asian and Middle Eastern Languages) in the 16-19 age group who stay in full-time education;

- the development of self-access and machine-assisted learning strategies;

- the strengthening of consortium arrangements between secondary schools and colleges and the development of

sixth form colleges;

- techniques of syllabus negotiation allied to the design of graded objectives;

- the provision in colleges of further education of business and technical education courses with a languages component; an improved range of vocational exams in languages;

- new technical and pre-vocational courses which offer opportunities for languages within an integrated curriculum.

22. At least one language in addition to English is rightly included, as a part of that core of learning to be made available during the statutory years, within recent proposals for curriculum initiated by HMI. It is consistent with all that has been said here that attention should be given to the provision of opportunity for foreign and community language learning within the 16-19 curriculum. It is clearly desirable to think of the teaching and learning of languages as part of a general linguistic education as well as a target in its own right. Central in this are those aspects of foreign and community language learning which bear on students' awareness of language and hence on their linguistic attitudes and understandings and on their proficiency, generally, as language users. The questions of balance between languages and purposes of linguistic proficiency are difficult, but an emphasis on community provision alone, as part of education's adaptation towards the requirements of a multicultural society, is not compatible with attaching continuing value to modern language learning.

23. There is one final point which arises from our concern for the teaching of languages. This is that it is both interesting and useful for students to come to know about language in general, and individual languages in particular. There are two sets of reasons for this belief in the value of seeking to foster a more explicit awareness. Generally, in a world in which communications and information technology play

an increasingly important role, there is interest in the nature of language and its central role in shaping and defining everyday life. More specifically, all users of language have to confront, in their development, patterns of use which reflect social considerations (such as gender, race or class). A necessary part of 16-19 education should be to help students to counter false or prejudiced views about languages (including their own) and to contribute to a fairer and more tolerant society by considering ways in which language can be used either to undermine or maintain prejudice.

24. All students should come to have some awareness of at least the following characteristics of language:

- its symbolic and systematic nature;

- its diversity and its variability according to context and situation;

- its capacity for change.

25. All these points may seem on the one hand obvious and on the other irrelevant. But although teachers of language and languages may know that they are obvious, school-leavers and many vocational tutors typically do not. Sensitive teaching about such points would aim to make 16- to 19-year-olds:

- more capable of effective study;

- more sensitive to the social nature of language (and thereby more effective in their use of language);

- more tolerant of language variety and, in later life, more accepting of language change;

- more interested in studying languages, including their own.

26. We have arrived by different routes at a general integrating notion. This we call simply an education in

language - a language, as the Bullock Report recalled, for life. We have advanced no new claims within this notion. Our central reminder has been the call to examine contexts, in life and work, for learning and to consider the integration of language with them in the linguistically diverse context of a multicultural society and an international world.

27. Beyond this, we have sought to argue for the relevance of longer-term understandings about language to accompany more immediate organisational emphases, and thus for the complementary nature of curriculum and language to be appreciated. We have also sought to locate one major contribution made by explicit language teaching provision (whether in English, foreign or community languages) in its contribution to a general linguistic education. We see value in the development of more explicit understanding about language, provided this is sensitively undertaken. Above all, we have sought to argue that a cognitive and socio-cultural approach to language (as exemplified in the Bullock Report) is far from being incompatible with a concern for more specialised uses in educational and vocational training. The interconnectedness of language, learning and the acquisition of skills is, on the contrary, wholly relevant to all forms of post-16 education.

28. <u>Issues for Staff and Curriculum Development</u>

i. What arrangements (formal and informal) exist in your LEA for liaison between schools and college staff teaching in the post-compulsory sector?

ii. What can you do to enhance these arrangements? (e.g. through the use of shared resources, teachers' centres, joint in-service work; by using new curriculum initiatives such as CPVE).

iii. What provison is there in your college/school for:

- courses with a specific linguistic content? (e.g. 'A' levels in English, communications, foreign

languages, BTEC courses, catering courses or secretarial courses with languages etc.);

- increasing language provision in other courses? (e.g. offering foreign language study as part of a new course or as part of communications teaching);

- promoting courses with different opportunities for language work? (e.g. a FLAW* scheme for sixth-form 'A' level students as part of/instead of General Studies);

- exploring ways of linking adult education language provision with further education language work? (e.g. by mixing a part-time day non-vocational language class with a BTEC National Diploma foreign language option or with an 'A' level class).

iv. Having assessed your current provision, can you define the criteria upon which that provision is based? Does the basis for the provision have regard to some of the factors mentioned in this chapter? (e.g the ways in which the languages and dialects of students can be brought into the school/college; Council of Europe research and recommendations etc.)

v. Explore ways in which you as a classroom teacher might go about:

- discovering what existing language knowledge students and staff in your institution have, and utilising it in the classroom; increasing the amount 'talk' which occurs in the language classroom;

- getting more students interested in studying and studying about languages/languages;

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* Foreign Languages at Work, London Chamber of Commerce and Industry, 1982

- making students more aware of the language they use, and its effectiveness;

- encouraging students to become more tolerant of language varieties and therefore more accepting of change;

- helping students to become more aware of the links between linguistic ability and the ability to study effectively;

- developing students' awareness of the ways in which language skills can lead to greater power and control over their own lives and life chances in a complex society.

vi. Discuss why it should be equally important to find successful practices for achieving the points made in (v) above in areas of apparent linguistic and cultural homogeneity.

vii. If these kinds of learning activities are to be achieved it is probable that your institution will need to develop policies on language and on education for a multicultural society. In what ways might this policy be formulated? (e.g. sub-committee of academic board etc.)

2. PROGRESSION INTO HIGHER EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT

29. We have noted a strong tendency within the devolved British education system for the curriculum at each level to be determined by the requirements of the universities. Even students who do not seek entry to higher education are exposed to learning experiences which are of purposeful relevance only to future university entrants. There are grave dangers in an overriding preoccupation with higher education - or equally with the transition to certain forms of employment - especially as entry to each of the subsequent stages is becoming increasingly competitive. Intrinsic benefits to the individual, and to the wider community, of the activities proposed as part of a genuinely educational process may be pushed aside in the repetitious rehearsals aimed at university entrance, or at a narrow range of skills thought to be useful to employers. There is a tension between an educational policy of learning for life - of developing skills and appetites for continued autonomous learning - and education as qualification for access to professional training or further study. In the latter approach students are encouraged to concentrate on learning the subjects they already know best and discarding those in which they have the most to learn. The full range of subjects is halved by the age of 14 and the range is narrowed again from the age of 16 to three or four subjects for those who are looking to higher education by the best known routes. Each of these stages of selection of subjects involves 'dropping' others; and each involves students being 'dropped' or 'dropping out'.

Modern Languages: Two Traditions

30. The dilemma described above applies to the teaching of almost all academic courses in further education, including English, since the ability to use English in conformity with certain standards has long been a passport to higher education, and consequently to the most prestigious forms of employment. The dilemma is posed with equal sharpness in the provision for modern languages: some university courses ask for a pre-entry qualification in a 'foreign' language. The Eurocentric bias apparent in the selection of the modern

languages which are generally made available in schools and colleges discriminates especially against users and learners of, for example, South Asian and African languages. Paradoxically languages which are not spoken in the United Kingdom are preferred to those community languages which are.

31. In contrast with the narrow range of commonly taught modern languages, a review of the courses and examination syllabuses in them reveals a diversity of practice which is also observable in the post-16 English curriculum. In part this arises from a great variety of categories of student in an age group which embraces a complex range of learner motivations, situations, previous experiences and needs. Not all of the categories which can be identified are, however, catered for equally.

32. At either end of a broad spectrum are found the 'A' level modern language specialist and the non-examination, non-specialist engaged in some form of education and training, with a complete range of students, courses and institutions in between. Some of the most commonly encountered categories are:

- those who need two or more 'A' level languages in order to proceed to a language specialisation in HE;

- those who wish to study one (or more) 'A' level language(s) as a main subject in order to qualify for entry to courses in HE which require no specified 'A' level (e.g. Law);

- those who wish to continue the study of a modern language to 'A' level because they expect to enjoy it and do well at it as a 'third' subject;

- those who wish to study an 'A' level modern language as a 'main' subject in conjunction with other subjects in order to proceed to combined honours degrees (e.g. French and Computer Science; European Business Administration, which awards a British and a French or German degree);

- those who wish to continue the study of a modern language but who wish/need to take three 'A' levels in other subjects;

- those who wish to continue the study of a modern language but for whom the demands of 'A' level studies would be inappropriate, their reasons for continuation being vocational or interest-based;

- those who wish to undertake a professional qualification for business and for whom the continuous study of a language will be of advantage to their career;

- those who speak at home or in the community a language in addition to English, but who have had no formal opportunities to extend their knowledge;

- those who wish to begin the study of a modern language not taught in the 11-16 sector and to study it to 'O' or 'A' level, or for another type of public examination (e.g. RSA, Institute of Linguists, BTEC);

- those who need to obtain an 'O' level or CSE pass in a modern language - either by retaking or by beginning a new one;

- those who are staying on in full-time education post-16 to take a pre-vocational or other general course, and who would benefit from a modern language/language awareness course.

33. These categories could include nearly all 16-19 students, and indeed there is a strong case to be made for all students continuing with the study of a language in addition to English throughout their education but with widely differing objectives. At present perhaps only those in the first category are adequately served by current literature-based syllabuses and even then only if they intend to proceed to one of the many traditional modern language degree courses.

34. The vast majority of currently available 'A' level courses are based on the study of literature and on the practice of prose translations. It is rightly believed that the study of these areas is one means of assessing a person's ability in a language. It is both sad and ironic, therefore, that current examination statistics and reports show that so many students are failing to acquire this linguistic ability. The fact that a curriculum and syllabuses which have an essentially 'academic' framework can result, in practice, in the failure of over 50% of the students in a prose translation and can encourage the acquisition, reading, study and assessment of set foreign language literature texts written in English is clearly a matter of concern.

35. On the other hand, the specialist demands of industry and commerce for business people who can trade in the language of their customer can result in the specialisation of certain types of language learning useful to defined vocational areas (e.g. bilingual secretaries) or specific jobs (e.g. foreign languages for export managers). It is worth noting that many companies choose to provide their own in-house foreign language training for specific posts, undertaken by their own staff or by private agencies, in preference to employing trained business personnel with some linguistic ability. Those courses which measure success solely against a checklist of limited language skills, whether job specific or more widely task-oriented, and no matter how related to the workplace, encourage linguistic over-specialisation in narrow and isolated vocational areas. Concentration can tend to focus on the assessment of performance to the exclusion of vital personal, social and cultural considerations and an understanding of role relationships, situation and context. A view of modern language learning in the 16-19 curriculum which advocated a solely skills-based approach would seem to be as limiting to the majority of the age group as the approach taken by the specialised academic curriculum.

<u>Traditions in English</u>

36. When considering the curriculum in English, as with

modern languages, it is important not to forget the reasons for its current peculiar shape. It would be easy to characterise 16-19 courses in English and communications by categorising exam syllabuses according to their origin, lining up on one side the FE exam boards such as BTEC or City and Guilds, and, on the other, the GCE boards dominated by the universities, with vocational and academic purposes each neatly lodged in their institutional homes. Of course, it is not as simple as that. Syllabuses are rarely designed for a single neatly defined purpose, and exam boards are as vulnerable to political, economic and social trends as the rest of the education system. Two examples might help to illustrate this point. The RSA, commonly thought of as a board serving FE and as having an explicit vocational bias, offers exams in English literature that would raise few eyebrows in most secondary schools. The AEB Communications 'A' level, on the other hand, the work of a GCE board, has a clearly detectable vocational thread running through it. The picture is a complex one and any attempt at a brief description runs the risk of distortion and simplification. The attempt is worth making, however, as a necessary first step towards constructing a curriculum grounded on policy rather than on condition and expediency.

37. It is not as simple to describe the academic tradition as the majority of 'A' level examination papers in English literature might lead one to believe. English in the universities is in a state of turmoil. Recent critical writing suggests that it is idle to pretend that either the 'Great Tradition' or the critical procedures that have established it are free of ideology, and the existence of new artistic forms such as film and television has muddied the waters still further. These developments raise the possibility of literature becoming as much of a minority pursuit in the future as Latin is now. Despite this, 'A' level English literature, in a form largely unchanged since the 1950s, still dominates. It is not unreasonable to assert that the content of the course is almost immaterial to its popularity as an exam. Its influence derives from the ground that it occupies and its uncritical endorsement by the universities.

38. The academic tradition has helped to shape educational attitudes to spoken and written language, principally through its particular concern with those kinds of literature which are seen to have stood the test of time, but whose relevance to the experience of the young adults of today is often difficult to demonstrate. If the needs and interests of those students are to be valued, the place of creative uses of literature and other available media in the school or college curricula must be re-evaluated. Literature would not, of course, thereby be abandoned, but the comfortable assumptions that non-literary forms of language can be left to look after themselves would come under a severe challenge.

39. At the other end of the spectrum lie vocational courses that have begun to mirror 'A' level both in the clientele at which they are aimed and the level of study that they demand. Of greater relevance to the development of appropriate curricula for a broad range of young people, however, are the pre-vocational courses which often provide a route into specialised vocational training. This area has received much attention in the wake of the dramatic increases in youth unemployment that have characterised the last few years. Pre-vocational courses, foundation courses and MSC training all seek to provide quasi-educational alternatives to work. In the communication elements attached to these courses can be found a wholly different outlook on language, and the contrasts between this and the academic tradition could hardly be more marked.

New Curricular Approaches

40. Since the Bullock Report, a view - which has always seemed patently obvious to many teachers - has received wider official recognition, namely that all but the most stultifying jobs cannot be envisaged without complex uses of language. Despite concern at youth unemployment, current initiatives which take full account of the impact of unemployment on young people's lives do not always provide adequate opportunities for language development work. It could be argued that there is now some acceptance, at least in recent schemes, that language development for life should

be offered to those likely to become unemployed. It seems to be less accepted that all should receive an input of such a nature. Initiatives need to be taken towards language education for life outside the framework of study and work. A fully adequate curriculum for all 16-19 students would provide opportunities for the development of confidence in the use of language for self-expression, for a range of social purposes, for creative expression, and for cultural and literary purposes, whether in terms of appreciating or doing. Clearly the preselection through the education system of a category of young people who will become unemployed cannot be justified: few would accept that language courses should be set up with a purpose of preparing certain groups to accept unemployment more readily.

41. If it is accepted that further education should be on universal offer, it must also be accepted that its provision has to become comprehensive, in language terms, as in other meanings of that word. This requires courses of language development, available to all students in further education, to relate to social and cultural purposes as well as to academic ones: in short, the skills developed have to be transferable to purposes which the students themselves identify as valid.

42. The implications of these aims for any post-16 curriculum are considerable. Clearly, within a broad and flexible curriculum framework, as is provided by CPVE, attention can be given to language development both for social and vocational purposes and for subject-related cognitive purposes. Similar opportunities are available in comparable programmes structured around a core curriculum (e.g. TVEI or some BTEC foundation courses). Within the more traditional format of the GCE and CSE boards, many schools and a few colleges have developed mode 3 syllabuses which allow for the achievement of language objectives within a subject-based syllabus. At 'A' level, as well as BTEC National/HND, the vested interests of specialists seem to leave no space for development of more generalisable language skills. This is true even of many apparently interdisciplinary examinations (e.g. the London 'A' level

General Studies which precludes any language study from its curriculum). With respect to the new GCSE proposals*, the intention to move towards criterion-referencing will offer an opportunity for innovative syllabus planning which provides scope for teachers to develop courses that pay much greater attention to the process of learning than to the body of knowledge to be transmitted. The ability and specific skills required to handle language confidently in a variety of styles are crucial to student achievement in most school subjects. It is therefore crucial that room is found in all GCSE syllabuses for specific language work linked to the content of the subject being studied.

43. A curricular approach to the learning and use of the languages, whether in regular use in Britain or not, in the 16-19 sector must see language development activities not in terms of 'content' but rather as a series of 'processes' whereby personal development, different attitudes and new awareness might be explored and encouraged. One major point which these examples illustrate, however, and which is of particular relevance to modern language learning is that subjects need not be seen as discrete and self-contained studies which vie for power and position in the curriculum, some being seen as 'core' whilst others are labelled 'ancillary'. The 'status' of individual subjects should be clearly seen to be less important than the integrated whole. This division of 'core' and 'ancillary' subjects would seem to be particularly significant to foreign languages in the 16-19 curriculum since they are themselves often widely regarded as 'ancillary' or 'option' subjects, whether it be down the academic line (the foreign language may be the second or third 'A' level choice), or along the vocational route (on BTEC courses, foreign language study is optional). If it is accepted that foreign language learning is an integral part of the 11-16 curriculum, then should it not follow that foreign language activities, at least in some form, are of equal, if not greater, importance in the 16-19 curriculum, and that we should be working towards a situation

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* See GCSE National Criteria (HMSO, 1985) and local syllabuses available from the regional GCSE boards.

in which languages appear as part of the integrated post-16 curriculum? The riposte that resources would not allow this to happen cannot be easily accepted if one considers the following findings of an HMI report*:

> 'The modern language staff in the colleges visited were experienced, stable and well qualified. Many had spent extended periods of time in a foreign country and in other occupations besides teaching.'
>
> 'Modern language sections were well provided with resources.'
>
> 'They had a good supply of equipment, some of it quite sophisticated, and an adequate supply of materials.'

44. With the exception of community languages (where learners have a readily available linguistic and cultural context for the language in Britain), it is not realistic to imagine that foreign language work should or could enter all aspects of the curriculum in the way that English does. The kind of effortless and continual exposure to the culture associated with learning which takes place in a society where English is the medium of instruction, communication and assessment is simply not possible in a country where foreign language and cultural contacts are still localised in the minority who can afford regular foreign travel. Nonetheless, it would seem an unnecessary waste of the teaching resources and learning environments which are available not to entertain the idea of at least working towards a nationally co-ordinated policy on an education in a language other than English for all.

45. The achievement of such a situation would entail adjustments to some of our accepted understandings about foreign language. The questions we should have to ask would not be of the order of 'Literature or language?' or 'Literature or civilization?' but rather 'What kind of

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* Modern Languages in Further Education 16-18, HMSO, 1980.

literature?' or 'How to assess its impact and meaning for students in the 16-19 age group?' In this way, our conception of appropriate literature would have to include texts as diverse as guidebooks, newspaper and magazine articles, advertisements and notices, leaflets, reference books, textbooks, as well as short stories, novels, plays, poems, songs, biographies, etc. We should, as far as we are able in collaboration with students, attempt to define a student's probable needs in language study whether within the medium of instruction, which is not always the student's dominant language, or whether in any other language she or he chooses to use. We will then be in a position to design a syllabus, and, having done that, to elaborate positive methods of assessment. This method of arriving at a syllabus and means of assessment seems to be the reverse of what happens now in most public examinations. A model, which focuses centrally on the stage of needs analysis and negotiation is presented in Figure 1. (see page 24)

46. When needs analysis is expressed as a checklist of skills it can make salient a range of purposes or target uses of language. The usefulness of such checklists may readily be appreciated. The attention of students and teachers may be focused on identifiable rather than indefinite goals, so that meaningful negotiation can take place between participants. There is an obvious relevance to language uses to which students are introduced since such checklists are normally composed as the result of study of actual uses of language within specified settings. An accompanying flexibility forms a further advantage. This is because a checklist does not exact or constrain any particular manner of classroom work, and permits a cumulative, profile mode assessment.

47. Problems arise with checklists when they are used as blunt instruments. There is no argument with a flexibility which leaves teaching free to develop, nor with the intention of recognising abilities which go unrewarded in traditional public examinations and which are relevant to future employment. However, some misgivings must arise about a conceptual framework which leaves an expanding area of

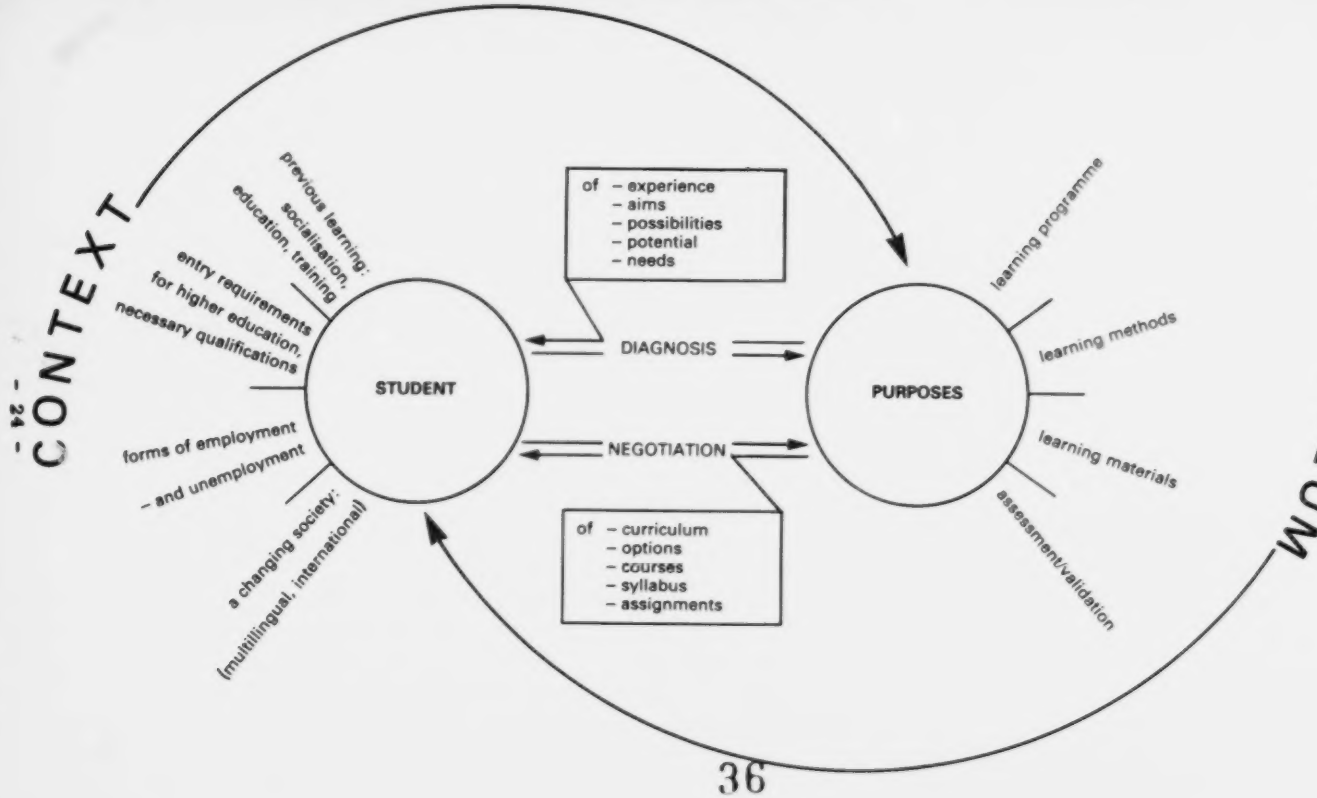

Figure 1. Needs Analysis and Negotiation (evolved from FEU Curriculum Development Model)

education inadequately, and in some ways misleadingly, theorised. For development in language to be conceived merely as the acquisition of skills is to sever language from its connection with individual intention, with social practice and with wider cultural understanding. It is only with the additional element of realistic student-teacher negotiation that these connections are re-established and guaranteed.

48. The learning of forms of language for specific use in education, or for use amongst different linguistic communities in the UK or abroad, involves widely ranging processes, and the levels of attainment reached are likely to be equally varied. The validation of those levels of attainment which can be identified could, nevertheless, all be located within a similar framework of authentic use for real purposes, in a way which is discussed in the following section on examinations.

49. Teaching programmes which accept these assumptions are likely to recognise the importance of encouraging talk as a serious educational activity, and will be promoting the kind of writing which is undertaken for real purposes and aimed towards a genuine audience. The use of language appropriate to context will also be an assumption in the choice of linguistic registers to be offered.

50. Issues for Staff and Curriculum Development

i) Look at the ways in which the teaching and learning of language are taking place in your institution. How is the language presented? Is it contextualised? Is it authentic? Is it suited to the needs of your students? If the answers are no, how can you improve the situation? Have you exploited all the resources available to you? (e.g. LEA advisers, teachers' resource centres, colleagues, other institutions in the area, local firms, press, publishers' catalogues, radio or television or the local community).

ii) How can you initiate debate on the need for a language policy in your institution? (e.g. set up a working party, present a paper at a departmental meeting or academic board.)

iii) Have you explored all the possibilities open to you for influencing syllabus content and assessment procedures? (e.g. through representation on examination boards.)

iv) What means can you use in your institution to gain general acceptance for the inclusion of languages other than English in new schemes? (e.g. French for catering; community languages for community care.)

v) What steps have you taken to keep up to date with new curriculum and examination developments? (e.g. attendance at courses, conferences, in-service sessions, etc.)

vi) Does the concentration on linguistic skills that characterises most vocational courses adequately represent the nature of language and the way it is acquired? What are the specific purposes to which your students might put a language other than English?

vii) Should the opportunity to study a language other than English be extended to all students in the 16-19 sector? Should languages be optional or part of a compulsory core? In what ways could foreign/community language learning realistically become part of the compulsory core in courses you teach? How could modules of existing courses (e.g. communications syllabuses of BTEC courses, the CPVE English) be extended to all students in the 16-19 sector? Should languages be optional or part of a compulsory core? In what ways could foreign/community language learning realistically become part of the compulsory core in courses you

teach? How do modules of existing courses (e.g. communications syllabuses of BTEC courses, the CPVE framework) lend themselves to the inclusion of language study?

viii) Where foreign or community language stud features in a pre-vocational course, what implications does this have for the organisation of teaching programmes, resources, staff expertise, etc.?

ix) How can staff in mainstream subject areas become more aware of their role in relation to developing students' language abilities? By what mechanisms can language staff (whether FL, ESL, CL or EMT/communications) work more closely with other staff?

3. THE VALIDATION OF LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE BEYOND SIXTEEN

51. Schools, including community schools and sixth form colleges, colleges of further education and adult education institutions are having to cater for a clientele whose academic and employment prospects are less predictable than hitherto. The attempt on the part of the examining bodies to adapt to the market created by this new clientele is tending to accelerate blurring of the traditional divide between academic pursuits and vocal skills in language education.

Convergent Purposes

52. With the formation of TEC and BEC in the 1970s there was a major extension of curricular assumptions to be co-ordinated with 16-19 education. More recent developments - ABC, YTS, TVEI and CPVE - have increased the pace of curricular change, and the recommendations of the Review of Vocational Qualifications are likely to lead to further developments. At the same time, adjustments within the minority routes of 'O' and 'A' levels have been widely sought and will come to greater fruition within a criterion-referenced GCSE.

53. In the construction of a curriculum map of the demands on language of present courses, the central distinction between academic and vocational purposes needs to be accompanied by a critical concern for a more general, educational ground. John Dixon (1979) has argued that curricula of either an academic or a vocational kind may be conceptualised as equally though differently specialised. This emphasis may be contrasted with broader social, personal and educational purposes. Hence the (differently) specialised concerns of academic and vocational courses may be seen as occupying either end of an axis in which the middle ground is taken by more integrated purposes.

Specialised Academic Purposes	_____	Integrated Social and Personal Purposes	_____	Specialised Vocational Purposes

The importance of specialist concepts, and of a register of formal communication within specialist subject disciplines, can at once be taken for granted. But the literature of language in education displays an old distinction between language used for formal presentation and language used for exploratory purposes where theories are constructed or new ideas shaped and contextualised. An educational rationale for language should illuminate for teachers the cultural and socio-linguistic complexity of educational situations. The apparently straightforward notion of the language register of a curriculum subject must be broken down and analysed to reveal for students and teachers the different uses of language involved in teaching/ learning a subject. There is now a growing body of evidence* which reveals that a learning environment in which the different uses of language and their 'appropriacy' for various situations is made explicit, increases the efficiency of learning of all types of activity, whether cognitive or practical.

54. Widely advanced dissatisfactions in urban schools with patterns of assessment in specialised 'A' levels have stressed the ways in which they put constraints on teaching and curriculum as well as appear to discriminate against bilingual and bidialectal students. They have further emphasised the narrow range of student abilities in language and in language-linked cognitive operations which are sampled, the limited incentive to speculate and to theorise and the insufficient attention paid to spoken language. These arguments are applicable in different ways to all curriculum subjects within the context of curriculum reform. They are not relevant in detail here but it is important to reassert their claim to attention. For what has been put forward as the necessarily specialist language of academic learning has often meant no more than the particular forms of writing demanded by particular forms of examination.

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* Referred to in : Building a Framework: McAllister, J. and Robson, M., National Extension College, 1984.

55. The traditional view has been that the maintenance of academic standards depends on attaching overriding importance to specialist writing of the kind which is sampled within 'A' level examinations. It is necessary to note the lack of rigour in this view. The most elementary historical awareness of academic styles suggests the need to distinguish between what may be actually functional in such styles and what is merely peripheral; yet such discriminations are seldom made. Above all, there is an astonishing neglect in this argument of the repeated demonstrations of the unreliability of traditional patterns of examination as sampling methods.

56. There is a tendency in some curriculum writing about 16-19 education (e.g. many FEU publications) to regard as unproblematic specialised academic uses of language, perhaps because they represent only one minority route within a range of other more urgent and immediate needs for young people preparing for adult life and work. However, they should not be neglected nor regarded as unchallengeable. These specialised uses of language remain the path towards higher education. We shall not have better teachers of non-specialised or vocational courses through having less informed teachers of 'A' level. Nor is it at 'A' level alone that there is a tendency to forget that specialised uses of language have to be developed and learned. Bullock counselled us that '<u>the teacher should extend the ability of the pupil as a writer primarily by developing his intentions and then by working on the techniques appropriate to them</u>'. The sanity of this judgement needs to be protected generally, especially in the context of powerful washback effects from academic examinations.

57. It then becomes clear that the comments made about languages in vocational preparation are not so different from those which have been made about specialised academic uses. This may seem surprising in view of such very different target populations and curriculum aims. At the curriculum level, there is all the difference in the world between the minority route of specialist subject learning and majority needs for mastering the language demands made in different

places of work. Nevertheless, both orientations require students to engage with language's constraints, that is with public traditions of the use of language in different social contexts.

Towards a Common Communicative Core

58. It is too early to expect the Secondary Examinations Council (SEC) to succeed in imposing coherence within the current framework of examinations, though the new sets of GCSE criteria represent a step forward. The onus consequently falls upon practising teachers and lecturers to voice their concerns and organise their work accordingly. The effect of free enterprise between examining bodies servicing further education runs some danger currently of duplicating elements in core studies areas. A potential now exists, however, given the aims specified for the CPVE framework, to develop a comprehensive framework for continuing linguistic development within the areas of communication, personal and career development, social skills, problem solving, creative development and information technology.

59. There are, perhaps surprisingly given their conflicting traditions, certain echoes from the CPVE core in the common core accepted by all 'A' level boards examining in modern languages. The papers actually set still lag behind since they include methods of testing in which the kinds of skills assessed bear little relation to authentic uses of language. Nevertheless, the agreed core components are the following:

Reading

i) Detailed and specific comprehension of an unprepared text in the foreign language and the ability to reproduce the meaning in correct English.

ii) General comprehension of an unprepared extended passage in the foreign language.

Writing

iii) The ability to write continuous prose in the foreign language.

iv) The ability to use the language in a precise and disciplined manner.

Speaking

v) The ability to converse in the foreign language fluently and accurately.

Comprehension of the spoken language

vi) The ability to understand sustained speech in the foreign language.

60. What is perhaps most noticeable about this agreed formula is that an absolute requirement to study literary texts has been dropped even though most of the papers still contain a strong literary element. The continuing relegation of oral skills to a minor focus of the assessment remains a feature of all of the existing 'A' level papers. A preference for the more formal skills of translation, comprehension and essay writing is a clue to the residual, covert intention to filter an academic elite, rather than to encourage the development of useful skills. But there is clearly scope for common purpose between teachers working in what have up till now been very different traditions.

61. Directions in which development might take place are suggested by the two boards offering English language at 'A' level. Development is still at an early stage, but the syllabuses have been approved by the SEC, and the differences between them are particularly instructive in the light of the present debate. Both owe a debt to the academic study of linguistics and in both cases the discussions that preceded their acceptance addressed themselves to the fundamental question of 'What kind of language study is appropriate in

schools?'. It would be fair to distinguish between them by saying that the London Board syllabus is an attempt to initiate candidates into the specialised language and procedures of linguistics and, to this extent, its academic rigour rests upon its definition of content. The JMB syllabus, on the other hand, whilst conscious of linguistics as a discipline, proposes a form of language study that is less dependent upon linguistic terminology, and places a significant emphasis on the skills that candidates are able to develop in their use of language. Both recognise the fact of linguistic variety and accept the notions about 'appropriacy' that accompany this, but each chooses to tackle this in ways that have quite different implications from an educational point of view.

62. Further ways forward are indicated by the growing interest in, on the one hand, the examining of English language at 'A' level and, on the other, the provision of exams at GCSE level in 'communications'. 'A/S' level is also seen in some quarters as a way of meeting the need for courses which allow for integrated social and personal purposes. For this to occur, however, it would be necessary to allow 'A/S' level syllabuses to be 'free standing' and not dependent upon 'A' level.

Bilingual Skills

63. The existing skills of large numbers of bilingual pupils have until very recently been the object of much less attention from examinations boards and professional associations of teachers. This lack of concern is evidenced at 'A' level by examiners in modern languages who consistently use the term 'foreign language' synonymously with modern languages (meaning French, German, Italian, Spanish and Russian) without recognising that at least two of these languages - and a dozen others - are quite widely spoken by distinct communities living in the United Kingdom. The Open University's briefing documents on GCSE compiled in conjunction with the Secondary Examinations Council, regrettably, relate only to English and French.

64. To date the major contribution has been made by bodies outside the GCSE network: the Institute of Linguists (IL) with its principle of offering papers in whatever language might by requested, and with its new Bilingual Skills Certificate; the London Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI) with a similarly principled position on the range of languages offered, and a set of qualifications based entirely on the spoken language; the Royal Society of Arts (RSA); and the International Baccalaureate (IB).

65. Between them, the six consortia currently developing GCSE examinations plan to offer papers already in 1988 in the following nineteen languages: Arabic, Bengali, Chinese, English, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hebrew, Irish, Italian, Polish, Punjabi, Russian, Spanish, Turkish, Ukranian, Urdu and Welsh. The design of forms of assessment which can validate skills in those languages already present in the population could result from the convergence of reforms towards a single GCSE examination occurring against a background of opposition to current assumptions on the 'hierarchy of languages' in education as a whole.*

66. Despite this progress, the suspicion remains that examinations provide a source of motivation in direct proportion to their status within the society, rather than in proportion to the usefulness of the attainments they assess. Thus, for example, a pass at 'A' level in a 'specially approved language' in the University of London still possesses greater currency than the equivalent Grade II exam set by the Institute of Linguists. The Grade I exam and Mode 3 CSE papers do not command the same prestige as 'O' level, regardless of the fact that certain grades of pass are equivalent. This remains the case even when the skills tested at 'O' level can be shown to be of less practical use.

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* One of the aims of the EEC-funded Pilot Project on Community Languages in the Secondary Curriculum has been to monitor developments in this direction. This project is based at the Institute of Education, Bedford Way, London WC1.

67. Some of the responses evinced by a recent investigation of the currency of GCE passes in languages which 'may have close associations with minority communities' expressed the feeling that they might be 'easy options' and that it was natural therefore to expect higher grades in them than in languages more commonly taught (Reid, 1984). The findings of the Schools Council project Assessment in a Multicultural Society - Community Languages at 16+ tend to contradict this view: quite strong candidates looking at past papers in the University of London's range of specially approved languages are likely to be deterred from entering by the kinds of task set by the 'O' level papers in previous years (Broadbent et al, 1984). There are issues here which remain of fundamental importance to the assessment of linguistic performance in languages learned as second or foreign languages, or as the medium of instruction when such a medium of instruction is not the student's mother tongue.

68. Financial considerations are often quoted as a reason for a failure to develop alternative 'O' and 'A' level papers in the range of languages known to be spoken in the UK. But if educationally valuable schemes have been introduced for French, why not also for less commonly taught languages? The A/O French studies paper set by the JMB and based on an evaluative study of authentic tests and documents had four entries only in 1981 and twelve in 1982. This statistic raises a more fundamental question: why is it that teachers are not as a whole making use of such exams? It is clear that there is an overriding need for a thorough review and rationalisation of the preparation and assessment of exam candidates both in their main medium of instruction and in additional languages. Equally important is the need for an accepted structure of parities for all language examinations and schemes currently available to 16- to 19-year-olds (GCE boards, CSE boards, BTEC, RSA, LCC/BOTB, TVEI, YTS, CPVE, International Baccalaureate, Institute of Linguists).

69. **Issues for Staff and Curriculum Development**

i) To what extent do examination requirements provide motivation and purpose for your students?

ii) Are the skills tested by the examinations accepted as intrinsically valuable by your students?

iii) To what extent do examination requirements negatively constrain your teaching programme?

iv) Has the teaching team investigated methods of assessing achievement in language learning and study which do not involve formal examination (e.g. profiles, continuous assessment)?

v) What role might examinations such as RSA communicative language examinations, which are criterion-referenced and profiled, have in your language programme? Is there any reason why staff do not use these?

vi) Has your team investigated continuous and teacher-controlled methods of assessment? (e.g. those on BTEC language options.) What might be the implications of these new methods of assessment on classroom practice? (e.g. opportunities for student-centred, practical assignment work, and for negotiation between student and teacher.)

vii) What might be the implications for integration of language-based work in other parts of the curriculum? (Both vocational departments and less education-oriented courses such as YTS Mode A?)

4. PRIORITIES FOR REFORM

70. The major educational arguments which have been forced by heightened aspirations among young people and by underlying economic and demographic changes require, besides general policy decisions about language provision, the modification of curriculum, of assessment and certification and of existing institutional frameworks. For progress to be made towards implementing reform, immediate consideration needs to be given to structural and institutional changes which will facilitate the maximisation of opportunities offered by existing institutions through better co-ordination. Equally, attention should be given to the dissemination of information about good practice to the provision of adequate staff development, and to the formulation of a national policy framework which is flexible enough to allow local communities to have a say in the provision offered. These priorities are separately considered in the following sections of this chapter.

Language Development for All

71. An education which claims to maximise opportunities for all students, it has been argued in earlier chapters, must provide adequate forms of language development of all kinds. In the past the possibilities of lifelong employment in manual jobs or trades which demanded a minimum of language ability meant that such views had to be strongly argued for, particularly with some employers and training organisations, however, the disappearance of such career prospects makes the arguments superfluous. In order to provide such an education, changes in both policy and practice are required to ensure that all students undertake varied forms of deliberately organised and assessed language acitivity as integrated parts of their study and training.

72. The bewildering range of competing options for those students who decide to enter the FE system, whether at pre-vocational or vocational level, has already been referred

to, and there is no certainty as yet of CPVE gaining currency as an overarching framework at post-16 level. The Government's Review of Vocational Qualifications does, however, promise a certain amount of ordering of the qualifications structure, and therefore curriculum. The emergence of CPVE marks a breakthrough, not only in its emphasis on language skills in several core areas, but also in the emphasis on an integrated curriculum, negotiated between tutor and student on the basis of student interests and needs, and on opportunities for a regular review of student progress. In such a framework, and with a more comprehensive and comprehensible vocational qualifications structure, a coherent language policy in FE becomes a practical possibility.

Developing an LEA Language Policy

73. The incremental history of sections of the education system and its various sources of funding present problems which conflict with any attempt to develop a concerted policy. For example, the teaching of community languages is funded from Home Office Urban Aid programmes, with their own regulations and specific objectives, and with separate staffing. Another example giving cause for current concern is the provision for pupils with special educational needs, many of which are related to language. Here again structures have been developed separately and are controlled by separate administrative sections of local and central government; the result is that they have often been badly grafted on to existing institutions without permeating them, and exist as separate branches. Other types of specialist provision - English as a second language, industrial language training, MSC-funded TOPS and skills-related provision - again derive funding and organisation from quite different sources.

74. The current confusion at 16+ does however offer a possibility for building bridges between secondary and tertiary phases of education. The arguments in this document for a rationale for language and languages suggest a rationalisation of post-16 provision : this will be achieved

more effectively as part of a more general reorganisation of the curriculum from 14 to 19. Current discussion of 14-19 provision as a continuum, together with reforms of 16+ examinations, is creating a climate of change in which the skills basic to all education are assuming key importance. It is in this context that a clear rationale for language education 16-19 is essential, as are the implications of such a rationale for curriculum and institutional reorganisation.

75. A further recent finding should also be taken into account, even if adult provision is generally outside the scope of this paper. Local studies conducted on behalf of the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education have recently emphasised the extent to which many young people, particularly from the black communities, are looking to adult rather than to further education to meet their needs. It seems that particularly those of Afro-Caribbean heritage are leaving school alienated from formal education without the entry qualifications, and often without the desire, to embark on courses of further education:

> 'They are turning instead to Adult Education where they find the less formal style of approach more appealing. Some have basic education requirements - basic maths and English and developing social skills - others are seeking vocational, job-oriented courses. The traditional distinction between Adult and formal Further Education may be perceived by the providers, but it is not apparent to their minority ethnic group clientele.' (Adult Education and the Black Communities, ACACE, 1982).

The ACACE studies strongly suggest that, as far as black youth is concerned, adult educators should be prepared to consider, in conjunction with the other post-secondary providers, new informal ways of meeting their urgent needs, which are in any case needs which are felt in other sections of the community.

76. In most authorities the historic divisions between adult education, further education and schools are

institutionalised in the separate branches of administration, as are the gulfs between library and social services and education as a whole. As a result, inspectors and advisers working in the field of language rarely have opposite numbers in the relevant offices working to establish community or family-centred approaches.

77. ILEA, in its publication An Education Service for the Whole Community (1980), laid the basis for an integrated approach offering a range of educational provision to whole families, indeed whole communities. Implementation has meant that educational institutions develop 'outreach' work whereby those who could benefit from education are actively sought out, and measures are then taken to shape the resultant courses to perceived needs. In other authorities (Coventry, Leicestershire, Wolverhampton), community schools or colleges have provided a focus for convergence between providing institutions, schools, colleges, adult education. Such a convergence provides an opportunity for the development of a responsive policy and a co-ordinated provision of language education for all those who require it.

Changes in Structures and Curricula

78. In further education, perhaps even more than in schools, departmental divisions, reflecting similar divisions in employment, have traditionally been extremely rigid. The deleterious effects of this tradition on the education/training provided for young people and on their preparedness for work in a changing economy have been noted in many previous documents from the FEU and others.* Not least of the unfortunate results of this tradition has been the marginalisation of much excellent work in general studies, communications and other language-related studies. The 'real work' of education/training for the 16-19 age-groups has been perceived, by both vocational tutors and students, as being _

* See, for example Vocational Preparation, FEU, 1981; A New Training Initiative, MSC, 1980; The CPVE documents, JBPVE, 1985.

done elsewhere. Efforts to integrate such studies with vocational training, to provide opportunities for critical reflection on vocational studies and initial experience of work, have often been resisted, even in employment-based schemes such as YOP and YTS. If new initiatives are to make a real impact on the preparation of young people for life and work, the changes in curriculum organisation need to be accompanied by structural changes including course arrangements, institutional organisation and teaching and learning methods.*

79. Some recent curricular initiatives however (especially CPVE) offer support earlier in highlighting a necessity for accompanying change in the internal organisation of schools and colleges. Courses now tend to be taught by course teams, with fewer teachers following through whole groups of students, and often across traditional subject boundaries. Artificial boundaries between subjects, between types of education - academic, technical, vocational, non-vocational - and between phases of education are gradually being broken down.

Teaching and Learning Strategies

80. The implications for teaching and learning strategies lie in the direction of a greater co-operation between teachers, more team-teaching and group learning and an open, shared approach to enquiry and study. The contrast with traditional 'O' and 'A' level methods, emphasising closed subjects and approaches, individual study, competition, silent digestion and regurgitation of knowledge, is stark. The new approaches demand a more flexible approach to organisation and timetabling, enabling students to have time to share assignments and complete projects, teachers to have time to mark and plan,and both students and teachers to have time to meet more equally than in the past. Greater

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* See FEU project RP116 Curriculum-led institutional development (to be published).

flexibility also permits greater opportunities for negotiation of the curriculum on the basis of student needs and interests as well as community needs.

81. Such negotiated approaches are already familiar to many language teachers, especially those from an ESL or English/communications background. They are particularly appropriate to an education in language since the major problem for many language teachers is one of motivating students - either to learn languages for which they cannot see a purpose or to learn a language they think they know anyway. Approaches which provide links across the curriculum, which give language studies a context, a status and a rationale are therefore of great value to the language teacher. The development of self-confidence by students is clearly facilitated by improvements in the command of language and there are positive effects right across the education process.

82. But the problem of effecting the organisational change to permit these developments remains. Some FE colleges have led the way in innovation during the 1970s, but most schools, despite CPVE and earlier pre-vocational initiatives, remain firmly wedded to their subject-based, departmentally organised structure. Some institutions have found the device of developing a language policy,involving all departments and encouraging them to reflect on their role in helping students to achieve mastery of the language, a valuable motive force for change. If such an exercise is carried out in conjunction with a review of organisational effects of the courses we have mentioned, it can be a powerful impetus to developing new and more flexible structures.

Policy into Practice

83. A language policy, like any other policy, can founder without the support of appropriate structures - and without adequate resources - as is shown by the fate of some post-Bullock 'language across the curriculum' policies. Where all teachers were expected to become language teachers in a

timetable dominated by subject division, little progress was made. Even in arrangements accompanied by supportive staff development programmes, individual students' language needs tended to be met only if they could be clearly identified as remedial or ESL learners. In secondary school, as the student approaches the 16+ public examination hurdle, the demands of a subject-based curriculum begin to exclude many opportunities for activities which could involve students in discourse, role-play and creative expression. As teaching becomes more formal, so activities which encourage language development, and which are vital to the development of self-confidence for life and work, regrettably diminish. Only the most recent 14-16 or 16+ curriculum packages offer opportunities for language work to be integrated into a common core curriculum in a natural and effective way.

84. The emphasis on identifiable skills, although it can be appropriate for certain types of job training, has been shown to transfer only very uneasily to a curriculum area as wide as 'English'. It is also worth pointing out that the trainer's concern for the use of what is being taught neatly matches the English teacher's growing realisation of the importance of purpose and audience in language use. Nonetheless the checklist of skills that can be found in CPVE or in the common core for 'A' level exams for foreign language learners cannot do justice to expressive or creative uses of language and is really only useful when focusing firmly on the instrumental. The danger of this is that it fails to acknowledge that expertise in one kind of language is not acquired in isolation from others.

85. Taxonomies of skills are apt to leave out much more than they can possibly include. Other ways of focusing on clear objectives may be even less adequate however, especially in foreign language learning. The emphasis on 'mastery', i.e. competent performance at specific skills in prespecified tasks, has, despite all its shortcomings, been compared favourably with other models (see Developing Social and Life Skills, FEU, 1980).

86. Although checklists have evident shortcomings, especially if they are interpreted as providing a teaching programme in themselves, their usefulness is primarily as a means to effective negotiation with students of their own purposes in language development. Experience in negotiating the curriculum is still relatively limited in many areas of further education, but where it is successfully practised, the process takes place between teachers and learners, teachers and trainers, and between different agencies such as parents, employers, MSC, validating bodies and so on. Sometimes formal contracts are the outcome of the negotiating process, sometimes simply an agreed choice of optional subjects or learning objectives.

87. In the statutory phases of comprehensive schooling, innovation has been accomplished largely by those teachers who recognised the incapability of existing syllabuses and examinations to develop and display the talents of the pupils they were teaching. In English, methods of teaching/learning and assessment were developed involving greater concentration on course work and oral skills; in modern languages, graded objectives (again largely teaching oral skills) began to lay a more solid foundation for the acquisition of languages other than English. It remains, however, a matter of regret to many teachers of English and modern languages that, despite these improved procedures, norm-referencing still predominates over the fixing of criteria which have a recognisable face validity for students, teachers and employers alike. It is important that the criteria, when decided upon, should be clearly seen by all the partners in the educational process to relate to an authentic context of life and work.

88. Where these conditions are met, the organisation of courses and the traditional structures of education have usually been loosened. Links between schools, colleges and industry have been developed, timetables have become flexible enough to allow students and teachers to follow projects in the community and to take part in action research projects. Learning becomes more authentic and students are able to

choose, especially in consortia or in tertiary arrangements, between a wide range of possible options and locations for learning, perhaps building through a system of modules recorded on an individual profile a portfolio of educational experiences which are of genuine interest and relevance to both student and future employer or higher education institution.

89. It is perhaps where systems of profiling converge with modular course design that the greatest opportunities exist for development towards a core of language studies crossing all the traditional divides. A skills or competency approach can coincide to some extent with notions of face validity and negotiation. Such approaches remain more attractive generally to teachers of foreign and second languages than to teachers of mother tongues (including English) who tend to reject the concept of cumulative or 'incremental' competence.

90. A simple first step is for members of staff to explain their criteria and marking and assessment procedures to students and to be prepared to discuss them. It is unfortunately the case that the preoccupations of students themselves, as individuals or as members of the community, have up till now been largely disregarded in the development of relevant language policy and provision. Few examples of language policies, even in schools, have yet been developed. Nevertheless, what matters most is the process of developing a policy, involving all parts of the institution. This can be a continuous process, but with a series of projected outcomes which can be seen to be realised within limited periods of time.

91. Valid in its own right is the concern to involve students in discussions about language and learning. The very autonomy of adolescents as students and citizens depends on their ability to decide what skills they need in order to follow the paths they choose. This issue relates closely to points made earlier about education in language and its contribution to self-confidence and independence.

92. In each school and college, a policy on language and languages needs to be written and negotiated. Departments or equivalent working groups could work out what their contributions should be to the whole policy, and departmental or team contributions could then be discussed by all concerned. A continuous review of language policy and practice (as of other important educational policy issues) in and across working groups could be built into the job description of department heads. Those groups which have a designated servicing or resource function to other departments should be co-ordinated for this servicing role. These will, at least, include teachers of English and communications, ESL and English language support staff, library and media resource groups, special educational needs support teachers, foreign language teachers, information technology teachers, work experience co-ordinators and others as appropriate.

93. Co-ordination could most constructively become the responsibility of a designated person, whose task it would be to ensure that language policy is being developed across all departments. The same person might have a professional tutoring role or might work closely with the professional tutor to promote awareness of, and responses to, language needs. Clearly, once a language policy becomes part of the stated aims of the institution and of each of its departments, and is applied to students on each course, it should figure in processes of assessment and evaluation.

94 Figure 2 displays in graphic form the kind of cycle of negotiation and accountability that an inclusive process of development might generate within individual parts of a total language curriculum.

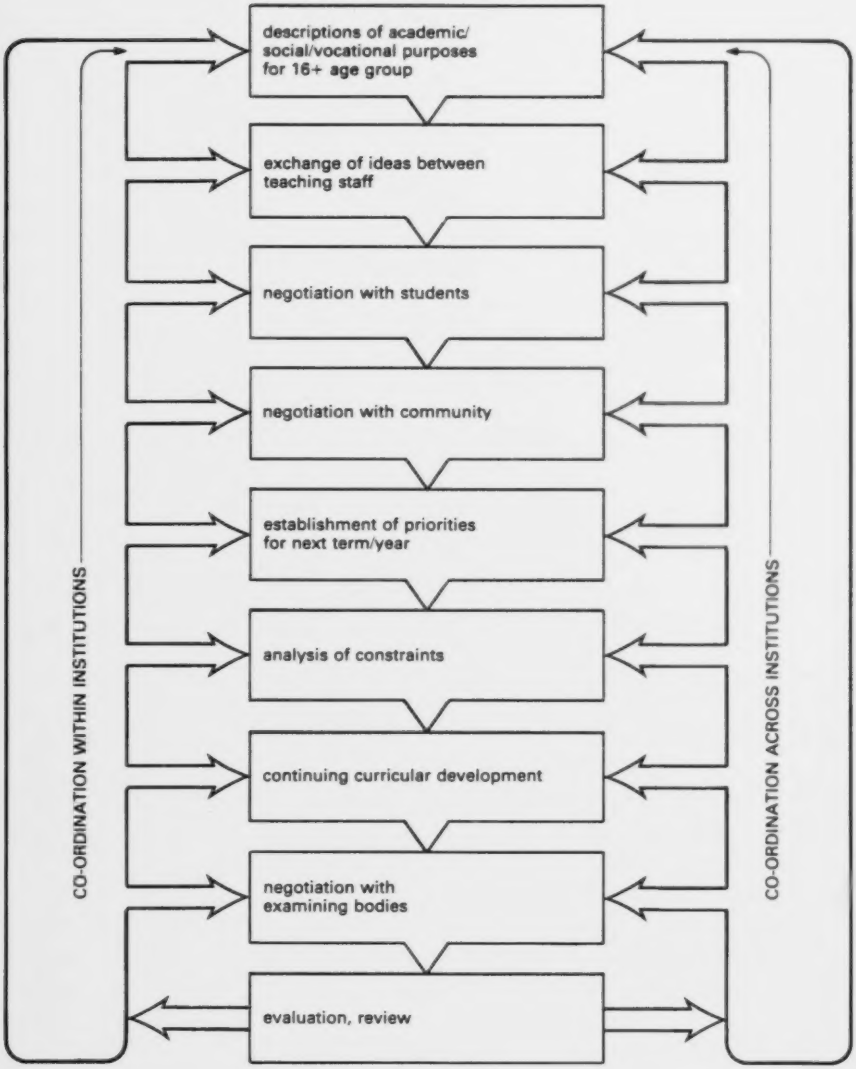
descriptions of academic/ social/vocational purposes for 16+ age group
exchange of ideas between teaching staff
negotiation with students
negotiation with community
establishment of priorities for next term/year
analysis of constraints
continuing curricular development
negotiation with examining bodies
evaluation, review
CO-ORDINATION WITHIN INSTITUTIONS
CO-ORDINATION ACROSS INSTITUTIONS

Figure 2.A Cycle for Accountable Curriculum Development

The Role of Staff Development

95. One consequence of the highly sectionalised organisation of FE into vocational departments and courses has been that most subject areas saw little need for staff development or in-service training. Staff had gained their experience and expertise in industry, craft or trade, and they saw their task as passing on practical skills to students. Other staff were, of course, graduate, and ony a small proportion sought an FE reading qualification. It was only with the collapse of the apprenticeship system and its day-release support from FE, and the growth of mass youth unemployment, that many of the traditional concerns, skills and methods of many FE teachers became peripheral to many FE colleges and students.

96. The realisation that the introduction of new educational initiatives - which meant asking teachers to change long-established practices - needed the aid of adequate programmes of staff development, has only recently been accepted by central agencies such as the DES and MSC. Local authorities are also coming to terms with the fact that the introduction of new policies - especially in relation to controversial areas such as race, gender, and class - require substantial staff development support if the policies are to be effectively translated into practice. There is, therefore, a much greater awareness among administrators that the management of curriculum change requires the introduction of new machinery, and that the machinery will function only if it is adequately 'oiled' through staff development.

97. In the case of language in education, the needs are particularly strong since most teachers see their own and students' use of language as 'given', rather than as something which depends on context. It is not easy for a profession which prides itself on its command of language to be reflective about its use of language. Staff development initiatives, especially in the form of participatory workshops which encourage critical but supportive analysis of teachers' styles and methods of delivery, are an ideal context in which to foster changed approaches.

98. Given a new education/training climate, however, in which new initiatives are introduced regularly, with funds for accompanying staff development, a context for staff to receive some training in language issues is becoming available. It is unlikely, regrettably but evidently, that large-scale funding will be made available for courses which concentrate specifically on the issues (however broad)raised in this document. Nevertheless, if the arguments advanced earlier about the importance of language competence for all young people who hope for employment and/or further education/training are accepted, it follows that a place for an education in language issues for staff (including vocational tutors) must be found in all staff development programmes. Such an undertaking is not on such a massive scale as it might appear, since the language issues would obviously be contextualised within the framework of whatever new initiative is concerned. Examples of such an approach are available from the work of the pilot year of CPVE, where staff development has been a vital and continuous feature of all the pilot schemes. Staff development programmes included both formal courses/workshops and more informal, though usually timetabled, meetings involving staff from several departments/specialisms. In such circumstances a concern for language issues, including mother tongue and foreign languages, arises naturally from the need to implement a core curriculum through vocational options and, where appropriate, additional studies including 'O' levels. All staff thereby come to share a common responsibility for student progress in language, numeracy, etc.

99. Even without such an obvious vehicle for the raising of staff awareness of language, there are examples of colleges* which have used in-service staff development time and curriculum development or liaison time for these purposes. The initial momentum in these examples was engendered by staff concerned with the needs of bilingual students in

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* See especially Appendix II (FEU/CPVE Project Summaries) of CPVE in Action, FEU 1985.
Also two examples can be found among current FEU-funded projects RPs 174 and 282.

mainstream FE subjects in multiracial colleges. But this need not necessarily be the case : in other colleges, interest has been awakened as a result of a concern for communication skills among foundation level students or overseas students. The common ingredient was a concern for student language development shared across departmental boundaries and with institutional backing.

100. The language issues on which staff development initiatives might focus have already been raised in the earlier chapters of this document and summarised in checklist form at the end of each chapter. A more detailed agenda for courses or other initiatives will obviously be drawn up at local level. The essential point in FE colleges is perhaps that staff development programmes related to new initiatives must not be dominated by the immediate staff needs - the content and organisation of the initiatives themselves - to the detriment of the broader educational purposes which underlie them. Equally important in schools is the related but very different point that the current concern with the introduction of GCSE is not allowed to squeeze out the very valuable lessons learned by those teachers who have participated in the introduction of vocational preparation courses and related staff development.

A Collaborative Process

101. An integration of those services which currently cater for language beyond compulsory schooling will permit greater convergence across the various disciplines of language provision. It will also entail a call for greater collaboration in the various strategies for curriculum and staff development.

102. However necessary it may be, the process of collaboration is very difficult, even between language specialists, given the very different traditions they start from and client groups they serve. (One significant example already noted is in the very different attitudes of different specialists towards checklists of skills.) The many

shorthand initials, ESL, EFL, FLT, ESP, CLT, ILT already provide clues to the perception of differences in the uses of language beyond the classroom : these differences have deep methodological and curricular implications which this document has done little more than hint at, and which can only be worked out through real practice and organised discussion.

103. Certainly, teachers are aware of the changing demands which call for a review of language provision as a whole. The danger is that the autonomy that many teachers strongly defend will lead them if not to oppose constructive innovations where they are suggested, then at least to continue their own teaching within the domain of their classrooms without exposing themselves to the ongoing debate. There is then a need which must accompany and complement the formal curriculum and staff development which circumstances are imposing. This is for teachers and lecturers to develop and share understandings amongst one another and with the wider society : to work towards a set of principles which are capable of unifying, as a matter of professional belief and pedagogic orientation, the very different starting points and contents of different courses.

Issues for Staff and Curriculum Development

i) Does your institution have a policy on language?

ii) What are the procedures in your institution for policy decisions and development?

iii) Which community organisations, or organisations of teachers could you link up with in devising a language policy and in pursuing reforms?

iv Are local institutions of further education, community colleges, schools, adult education centres, neighbourhood education centres funded and organised according to a coherent

plan? What opportunities exist for collaboration and interchange between them?

v) How can courses be made more flexible to accommodate student needs and interests? To what extent do courses permit negotiation of the curriculum with students on the basis of their language needs and capabilities?

vi) What opportunities do courses offer for diagnosis of student language needs and potential? What opportunities are there for regular reviews of progress? (e.g. formative profiles, guidance, and counselling facilities, etc.)

vii) What arrangements are made for staff development courses and discussions, and collaborative teaching in your institution? Do they cross subject boundaries?

APPENDIX: AN EXAMPLE OF A COLLEGE LANGUAGE POLICY STATEMENT

The language policy statement below was formulated recently by a large college of FHE. While the policy is not comprehensive, and relates more to English as a second language and community languages than to communications and foreign languages, it nevertheless embodies many of the principles and recommendations argued in this document.

POLICY STATEMENT FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS PROVISION

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 This document sets out the College's policy for the acquisition and development of language and communication skills in both spoken and written English, and of those study skills which are primarily concerned with English language use. The policy relates to all levels of ability and to all users of English including those for whom it is not their first language.

1.2 The principles contained in the academic policy statement should be assumed in the interpretation and application of this document. The comprehensive character of the College, its open access policy and its primary orientation to the local community together form the basis from which the policy for English language and communication skills provision is developed. Efficient operation, responsiveness to student needs and flexibility should be the three determinants of college provision for teaching and learning English and communication skills.

1.3 There are particular curriculum and staff development needs associated with the teaching of English language and communication skills. These needs are created by:

1.3.1 the location of teaching staff across the College which results in difficulties of co-ordination and co-operation in development initiatives;

1.3.2 changes in staffing and the rapid expansion of pre-'O' level work which has resulted in the use of a large proportion of part-time staff;

1.3.3 changes in the student population with increasing numbers of ethnic minority students which make it a priority to review provision in order to remove ethnocentricity from college resources and teaching methods;

1.3.4 the diversity of provision, which includes English taught as a specialist subject, English and communication skills taught as part of the core curriculum of courses, English taught as a second or foreign language, English language work to support study in other disciplines or areas of study, remedial work in English language and a range of courses and programmes in preliminary literacy.

2. PRINCIPLES

2.1 The College recognises the centrality of language in mediating our experience of the world and therefore will seek to ensure all students and members of the community have access to the means of improving their skills. The particular needs of students whose mother tongue is not English will be fully recognised.

The College recognises the value of diverse forms of language, but at the same time acknowledges students must achieve competence in standard forms appropriate to particular contexts. No single teaching methodology will suit all needs and therefore the College will provide a wide range of learning opportunities in English language and communication skills at all levels.

2.2 The College will ensure that all teaching staff are aware of their responsibility to teach the language of their discipline and to lead students to develop appropriate communication skills for the pursuit of their studies.

2.3 Provision will be made to assist students to identify their specific English language and communication skills needs and to meet these individual needs within course programmes or by referrals between departments or schools.

2.4 The College recognises that lack of skills or certification in English language can bar access to courses of study or progress through them.

Therefore, the College will seek to ensure, through a comprehensive provision of English language and communication skills teaching, that appropriate help and support are offered to those who need to attain particular levels of English language skills for the pursuit of any further or higher education courses.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

3.1 The responsibility rests with each School Board to ensure that the needs of its students in English language and communication skills are identified, catered for, and monitored.

This responsibility will normally be discharged through expertise contained within the school and, if necessary, by secondment of staff between departments or schools. Additionally, it may be discharged as appropriate by referral to English language and communication skills specialists or programmes located elsewhere in the College, e.g. to the Communication Workshop or to English as a Second Language programmes.

It is a further responsibility of School Boards to ensure that when course/programme reviews take place they include specific appraisal of their language content. English language and communication skills staff will be expected to take part in this appraisal.

3.2 In seeking to implement this policy the College recognises the importance of liaison between individual teachers of English language and communication skills. To this end a core group of specialist staff will be located in a specifically designated department, to ensure:

3.2.1 co-operation in the evaluation and development of teaching methods and materials;

3.2.2 leadership and opportunities for individual and group development;

3.2.3 continuing academic dialogue and co-ordinated research initiatives.

Other teachers of English language and communication skills who remain located in departments in which their work forms part of the core curriculum will work in partnership with this specifically designated department and be included in its course, curriculum and staff development activities.

3.3 The Communication Workshop will be developed as a centre of open learning to provide:

3.3.1 alternatives to class-based teaching as a way of taking recognised examinations;

3.3.2 flexible modes of learning, in terms of time, method or materials, to meet special needs;

3.3.3 a study area open to individuals;

3.3.4 a centre for testing in English language and communication skills in terms of development of tests for college use, advice on the development of tests, and storage of tests developed for use within the Workshop or elsewhere;

3.3.5 a resource centre for associated learning materials and media equipment.

Within this brief, the workshop will develop freestanding courses and offer support to other College provision and to agencies outside the College. This will be recognised in terms of appropriate staffing and funding.

3.4 Staff who are specialists in teaching English language and communication skills will be recognised as a college-wide resource. In particular their expertise will be called upon by subject specialists in the drawing up of courses and programmes.

In college course validation procedures attention will be given to the English language and communication skills content of any course and/or programme, and expert advice sought as appropriate.

3.5 The College will monitor the implementation of this policy, requiring annual reports for School Boards of Studies and from the specifically designated department (see 3.2 above). The reports from the School Boards of Studies will be primarily concerned with provision and staffing of English language and communication skills course elements. The report from the specifically designated department will relate to evaluation, research and curricular development.

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Jack Mansell, Chief Officer, Further Education Unit

Objectives

The objects for which **The Further Education Unit (FEU)** is established are to promote, encourage and develop the efficient provision of further education in the United Kingdom and for that purpose:
a) to review and evaluate the range of existing further education curricula and programmes and to identify overlap, duplication, deficiencies and inconsistencies therein;
b) to determine priorities for action to improve the provision of further education and to make recommendations as to how such improvements can be effected;
c) to carry out studies in further education and to support investigations of and experimentation in, and the development of further education curricula and to contribute to and assist in the evaluation of initiatives in further education;
d) to disseminate and publish information and to assist in the dissemination and publication of information about recommendations for and experiments and developments in further education.

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